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The Pope receives the Swiss Guards who will take their oath next Monday, 6 May, and praises the dedication and professionalism of the Corps

This morning the Pope received in audience the 23 new recruits of the Swiss Guard, who will give their oath this coming Monday, 6 May, in the Saint Damaso Courtyard in the Vatican. The date commemorates the death of 147 Swiss soldiers who lost their lives in the defence of the Pope during the Sack of Rome in 1527.

The Holy Father thanked the Guards for their valuable and generous service to the Pope and to the Church, affirming that he personally experienced the dedication, professionalism and love with which they carry out their work. He also thanked their families for willingly accepting their decision to live in the Vatican, and for supporting them with affection and prayer.

As the swearing-in ceremony coincides with Easter time this year, the Pope invited the recruits to be witnesses of the risen Christ, making current the announcement of joy of Easter, and “spreading the culture of resurrection, especially in those existential context where the culture of death prevails”, that is, among those who are entombed by their suffering, disorientation and hardship, offering them consolation and fraternity.

“During your stay in Rome, you are called to bear witness to your faith with joy, so that the many people you encounter, specially at the entrances to Vatican City, may have a good impression of the spirit with which you perform your job”, said the Holy Father. “To each one of you I ask this: do so in such a way that those whom you meet in your daily service, be they members of the Curia, colleagues in various fields in the Vatican, pilgrims or tourists, may discover also through you the love of God for every man. This is the first mission of every Christian!”

“It is necessary to be witnesses and apostles of personal and community renewal, as the people expect total dedication and holiness of life from those who are in the service of the Holy See, which you can offer both through your service and through the community experience. Life in the barracks teaches some ethical and spiritual principles, which greatly reflect the values that should be pursued also in life: dialogue, loyalty, balance in relationships, understanding. You are given the opportunity to experience moments of joy and inevitable moments of difficulty, typical of a collective experience. But above all you have the opportunity to build healthy friendships and to train yourselves with regard to the particularities and ideas of others, learning to recognize in

the other a brother and a companion with whom you can serenely share a stretch of the road. This will help you live in society with the right attitude, recognizing cultural, religious and social diversity as human richness and not as a threat. This is particularly important in a world which is living, as never before, enormous movements of populations and people in search of safety and a dignified life”, the Pope concluded.
